

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 9 MAY 2016

Meeting: Executive
Date: 9th May 2016
Subject: Local Plan Options Assessment and Selection
Report of: Head of Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Jo Brodrick
Status: For decision
Relevant Ward(s): All

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek the Executive's decision on which of the nine Options for housing and employment development proposed in the Options consultation should be taken forward for further detailed analysis, in order that a single Preferred Option can be decided on in accordance with the timetable for preparing the Local Plan.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the Executive agrees the following Selected Options for further assessment:

Option 2: Core Strategy Distribution;

Option 5: Kibworth SDA (North East proposal only);

Option 6: Lutterworth SDA; and

a variation of Option 4: Scraftoft / Thurnby, but based on a minimum of 1,200 dwellings in the vicinity of Scraftoft North.

2.2 Subject to inclusion of variant Option 4 detailed in paragraphs 4.31 to 4.35 that the additional costs be funded by a virement from the corporate contingency budget

2.3 That the Executive agrees that these Selected Options be subject to further tests of land availability, infrastructure requirements, transport impact, flood risk, viability, landscape impact, environmental sensitivity/mitigation and sustainability before being reported back with a recommendation for a single preferred option.

- 2.4 That the Executive agrees that these Selected Options and tests be formulated on the basis that provision of housing land is to be at a rate of 550 dwellings per annum (before allowing for completions and commitments).

3. **Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 To enable officers to carry out further analysis based on a smaller number of options.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Local Plan meets national and local planning objectives, and is based on a robust analysis in order to meet the tests of soundness at Examination.
- 3.3 To ensure that the Executive members have a full understanding of the factors to be taken into account in arriving at the selection of a smaller number of options for further analysis, including the results of the Members' workshops and the analysis, based on current information, of the other factors identified in the assessment methodology previously discussed by the Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel.

4. **Key Facts**

- 4.1 The Local Plan Options Consultation Paper (consulted on in September – October 2015, please see Background Papers) included 9 Options for accommodating future development needs to 2031. Based on the response to consultation on these options, together with other relevant information, the Council must now move towards a single preferred option which will be published for consultation in November 2016 as its draft Local Plan. This can be one of the options, or a combination of options, or some other hybrid solution based on them.
- 4.2 This preferred option will provide the Local Plan strategy for distributing housing and general employment development across the District during the plan period. This preferred distribution strategy will underpin the Local Plan and form the basis for a number of other policies. It will also inform and underpin preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), an important element supporting the Local Plan.

Flexibility Allowance

- 4.3 Appendix C of the Local Plan Options Consultation Paper set out housing requirement figures by settlement for each of these 9 Options. These figures were based on the Objectively Assessed Need for housing development of 475 dwellings per annum. This gives a total of 9,500 dwellings or 3,687 dwellings after allowing for completions and commitments at that time.
- 4.4 Members will be aware that the figure for Objectively Assessed Need is being updated through a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) for Leicester and Leicestershire, the initial outputs from which will

not be available until July. There is a prospect that this will increase the need for housing in the District. There may also be the need to consider making some provision in the Local Plan to assist neighbouring councils to meet their needs as identified by the HEDNA. Legal advice has been received that, pending receipt of the HEDNA, the Council should be planning for flexibility by making provision for housing development above the current OAN.

- 4.5 This flexibility would provide some 'future proofing' for the plan against possible pressures to release more land, for instance a recommendation from an Inspector to extend the plan period (as occurred in relation to the Core Strategy). The allowance would have the added advantage of providing sufficient housing land to enable sites to be brought forward from later in the plan period in order to meet any shortfall in 5 year housing land supply arising from unanticipated problems in delivery.
- 4.6 It is recommended that an increase of about 15% in housing provision should be planned for above the current OAN of 475 dpa, giving an interim provision figure for planning purposes of 550 dwellings per annum, or 11,000 over the Plan Period. This is equivalent to meeting more than the 'worst case' of recent national household projections (2008 based), thus minimizing the risk of being asked to meet a higher requirement at a later stage. Taking account of commitments and completions to 30 September 2015, this would give a planned provision (including windfall sites) of about 5,000. It should be stressed that this is not an increase in OAN (which will be done, if at all through the HEDNA), nor is it at this stage a new housing requirement (which will be set by the draft Local Plan and subsequently tested at examination).

Summary of the 9 Options

- 4.7 The 9 alternative Options consulted on during September / October 2015 and currently being assessed are:

Set A: Variations on the current distribution strategy

OPTION 1: RURAL - Variation on the current distribution strategy - with an enhanced rural focus.

OPTION 2: CORE STRATEGY DISTRIBUTION - Continue to use the current (Core Strategy) distribution strategy.

OPTION 3: URBAN - Variation on the current distribution strategy - with an enhanced urban focus.

Set B: Options with 1 Strategic Development Area

OPTION 4: SCRAPTOFT / THURNBY SDA - Scraptoft / Thurnby Strategic Development Area and reduced growth in other parts of the District.

OPTION 5: KIBWORTH SDA - Kibworth Strategic Development Area and reduced growth in other parts of the District.

OPTION 6: LUTTERWORTH SDA - Lutterworth Strategic Development Area and reduced growth in other parts of the District.

Set C: Options with 2 Strategic Development Areas

OPTION 7: SCRAPTOFT / THURNBY SDA AND KIBWORTH SDA - Strategic Development Areas at Scraptoft / Thurnby and Kibworth and limited growth in other parts of the District.

OPTION 8 SCRAPTOFT / THURNBY SDA AND LUTTERWORTH SDA - Strategic Development Areas at Scraptoft / Thurnby and Lutterworth and limited growth in other parts of the District.

OPTION 9: LUTTERWORTH SDA AND KIBWORTH SDA – Strategic Development Areas at Lutterworth and Kibworth and limited growth in other parts of the District.

4.8 In order to assist in the process of preferred option selection, two workshops were held to which all members were invited. The first workshop, referred to as a Briefing, received information on which to base option assessment. Members were asked to consider this before the second workshop. At the second workshop members discussed in mixed groups, based on the evidence available, what options should be rejected and then ranked the remaining options (see paras 4.13- 4.18 below).

4.9 This Member workshop process ran in parallel with, and took into account, a technical appraisal of the options. The appraisal was based on a framework which enabled each of the 9 Options for development to be assessed against the following factors:

A. Consultation – assessing the key issues raised during the Options Consultation in relation to each of the 9 Options.

B. Deliverability, comprising evidence on:

- 1) *Land availability* - using evidence from the latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and housing trajectories;
- 2) *Infrastructure* - using evidence from: infrastructure providers' consultation responses; the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; and the Strategic Transport Assessment; and
- 3) *Viability*– using evidence from the Viability Assessment.

C. Planning Principles, comprising an assessment against:

- 1) *Sustainability*, using evidence from the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Interim Report (September 2015) which accompanied the Options Consultation Document;
- 2) *NPPF Core Planning Principles*– using an assessment of each Option against each core principle; and
- 3) *Local Plan Objectives*– using an assessment of each Option against each Objective (as amended in light of consultation responses).

4.10 Further detail on what was included under each of these elements of the assessment is set out in Appendix A. The assessment made use of the information in the SA Interim Report (September 2015) prepared on the Options Consultation Paper, but the decision on which of the options should be pursued is based on the overall assessment and not the SA Interim Report alone. A full SA will be prepared to accompany the Draft Plan.

4.11 Detailed assessment results were prepared on each Option against the factors in paragraph 4.9 above and Appendix A and were given to all Members attending the Briefing. This is available as a background paper, available from the Democratic Services team (E-Mail: democratic.services@harborough.gov.uk). In order to summarise these for the workshops, the outcome for each was presented as a 'traffic light' score:

Red: the option performs poorly in relation to this factor.

Amber: the option does not perform well in relation to this factor, but could perform better with mitigation.

White: the option is neutral in relation to this factor, or there is insufficient information to make a judgement. (In the event no assessments were neutral).

Light green: the option performs adequately in relation to this factor.

Dark green: the option performs well in relation to this factor.

4.12 A significant number of red scores would indicate that an option should not be pursued, while a large number of green scores would indicate that the option should be assessed further.

Outcome of the Members' Workshop

4.13 At the member Workshop on 16th March 2016, the traffic light scoring was used to inform discussion. The consensus view was that the following options should not be taken forward for further analysis:

Option 1: Rural.

Option 2: Core Strategy Distribution.

Option 3: Urban.

Option 7: Scraftoft / Thurnby SDA and Kibworth SDA.

4.14 Of these, Option 2 was the more marginal choice, based mainly on concerns about the impact of this option, combined with existing commitments, on Market Harborough.

4.15 On an individual Member vote for the top 3 options from the remaining 5, taken before the group discussion of them, the preferences were as follows:

1. Option 9: Lutterworth SDA and Kibworth SDA - 20 votes.

2. Option 6: Lutterworth SDA - 15 votes.

3. Option 8 Scraftoft / Thurnby SDA and Lutterworth SDA – 13 votes.

- 4= Option 4: Scraftoft / Thurnby SDA – 7 votes,
Option 5: Kibworth SDA – 7 votes.

- 4.16 The remaining 5 options were also ranked by group discussion in the following order:
1. Option 6: Lutterworth SDA.
 2. Option 9: Lutterworth SDA and Kibworth SDA.
 3. Option 8: Scraftoft / Thurnby SDA and Lutterworth SDA.
 4. Option 5: Kibworth SDA.
 5. Option 4: Scraftoft / Thurnby SDA.
- 4.17 During discussion, Members expressed the view that, within any option involving the Kibworth SDA, the choice was based on the Kibworth North East scheme, providing a by-pass, and not that at Kibworth North and West.
- 4.18 It was stressed to members, however, that this could not be a decision and that that this would be made by the Executive following a full analysis by officers of all the relevant data and consideration and recommendation by the Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel (LPEAP).

Further Analysis of the Options

- 4.19 Since the workshop further information was received on the viability of Options 1, 2 and 3, which was not available at that time and data on the viability of the Scraftoft/ Thurnby SDA and Lutterworth SDA were revised. It has also been possible to review the data on housing land availability, especially by revising the trajectories of housing delivery based on the SHLAA. The revised analysis using traffic light scores is set out in Appendix B and was presented to the LPEAP. The notes included in the table are necessarily very brief, but Members of the Panel were also provided with a background paper including more detail.
- 4.20 It must be emphasised that, in order for the Local Plan to be found sound at examination, the choice of Selected Options for further analysis must be based on a robust analysis of the evidence available at this stage. The recommendations and analysis below take the results of the members' workshop into account but differ from the preferences expressed where there is clear evidence for doing so and where officers consider that it would be difficult to argue otherwise at the examination. In order to demonstrate how this has been done, the conclusions of the Member workshop held on 16th March 2016 are put in ***bold italics***.

Sites Recommended for Exclusion

- 4.21 Appendix B shows that **Option 1 (Rural)** performs poorly or not well in relation to 8 of the 11 factors considered. In particular it performs poorly in relation to infrastructure and planning principles, largely as a result of its unsustainable distribution of development to villages with limited facilities and its encouragement of the use of private cars on rural roads for many journeys. It also does not perform well in terms of being able to meet some housing

targets for settlements, of flooding problems and as the most unsustainable option according to the Sustainability Appraisal. It is therefore recommended that (despite scoring well in terms of 5 year land supply and viability) ***this option should be rejected in line with the preferences of the Members' workshop.***

- 4.22 **Option 3 (Urban)** performs poorly or not well in relation to 7 of the 11 factors considered. It has a fundamental problem in that it does not deliver the required amount of housing land. This is because there would be insufficient SHLAA sites in Market Harborough and Lutterworth to meet the potential requirement (taking account of the increased housing target including the flexibility allowance). It also fails to deliver a 5 year land supply at the date of adoption and does not perform well in relation to infrastructure. It is therefore recommended that (despite scoring well or adequately in terms of planning principles and viability) ***this option should be rejected in line with the preferences of the Members' workshop.***
- 4.23 **Option 7** performs poorly or not well in relation to 8 of the 11 factors considered and does not perform well in relation to any of them. It performs poorly in relation to lack of public support, traffic impacts and viability. Option 7 combines the traffic impacts in Leicester City from the Scraftoft/Thurnby SDA with those from the Kibworth SDA. The interim viability appraisal shows that the Scraftoft/Thurnby element is fundamentally not viable as a result of low house sale and land values and high infrastructure costs. Option 7 only just has a 5 year land supply in place at the date of plan adoption, because of the time needed for master-planning and approval and the subsequent difficulty in building and selling more than 150 dwellings a year on any one site, assuming no more than 3 outlets will be available at any one location. It does not perform well in relation to the NPPF Core Planning Principles and various infrastructure issues, including waste water treatment facilities, flooding downstream from Scraftoft/Thurnby and secondary education in Kibworth. It is therefore recommended that ***Option 7 should be rejected in line with the preferences of the Members' workshop.***
- 4.24 **Option 4** (as originally proposed in the Options Consultation Paper) performs poorly or not well in relation to 7 of the 11 factors considered but does well in relation to ensuring a 5 year land supply at the date of adoption. The interim viability appraisal shows that this SDA is fundamentally not viable as a result of low house sale and land values and high infrastructure costs. It also had the least support from the public. It does not perform well in relation to the NPPF Core Planning Principles and various infrastructure issues, including waste water treatment facilities in Thurnby and flooding downstream in Leicester city. This option would also result in the A47 being at 84% capacity. ***It was given the lowest ranking (of the five retained from the 'first sieve') by both the individual member voting and the group discussion at the Member Workshop.*** It is therefore recommended that ***Option 4 be rejected,*** but see paragraphs 4.31- 4.35 below.
- 4.25 **Option 8** performs poorly or not well in relation to 8 out of 11 of the factors considered and does not perform well in relation to any of them. It is especially poor in relation to transport in both SDAs, flooding in Lutterworth, and viability in Scraftoft/Thurnby, where the interim viability appraisal shows

that this SDA is fundamentally not viable as a result of low house sale and land values and high infrastructure costs. Option 8 combines the traffic impacts in Leicester City from the Scraftoft/ Thurnby SDA with the problems that the Lutterworth SDA causes on the A426 Rugby Road, where the road would be over 85% capacity, and at the M1 Junction 20. It does not perform well in relation to the NPPF Core Planning Principles and Local Plan Objectives, partly as a result of the extensive flood zones 2 and 3 and the SSSI at Lutterworth. There are also infrastructure issues at the Scraftoft/ Thurnby SDA regarding waste water treatment facilities in Thurnby and flooding downstream in Leicester city. However, unlike other two-SDA options it adequately delivers a 5 year land supply at the date of plan adoption. Option 8 performs worse on the current evidence than Options 4 and 7 and so it would be difficult to justify its retention ahead of these two options. ***Despite being ranked third by both the individual member voting and the group discussion at the Member Workshop, it is therefore recommended that Option 8 be rejected.***

- 4.26 Rejection of Options 4, 7 and 8 would not mean that there will be no further significant development at Scraftoft/Thurnby merely that this will not be in the form of the SDA proposal in the form that went to consultation. The SHLAA indicates that there are new sites for about 400 dwellings in the area which are suitable, available and achievable (in addition to sites for 945 dwellings already completed or committed). In addition a proposal has recently been submitted for an extension to the SDA, the implications of which are discussed further below (paras 4.31 – 4.35).
- 4.27 **Option 9 (Lutterworth SDA and Kibworth SDA)** was one of the Members' preferred options (ahead of Option 8). This option performs well in relation to public support, the sustainability appraisal, and viability (especially on the basis of the Kibworth North and East scheme). However it performs poorly or not well in 8 out of 11 factors, including performing poorly with regard to transport impacts (at Lutterworth as described above and to a lesser extent at Kibworth as a result of potential impacts in Leicester) and flood risk at Lutterworth. It does not perform well in relation to only marginally achieving a five year supply at the date of adoption, because of the time needed for master-planning and approval and the subsequent difficulty in building and selling more than 150 dwellings a year on any one site, assuming no more than 3 outlets will be available at any one location. There are also infrastructure issues in relation to waste water treatment and the secondary school in Kibworth. ***On this basis, despite coming first on the individual vote and second on the basis of group discussion at the Members' workshop, it is recommended that Option 9 be rejected.***

Sites Recommended for Further Analysis

- 4.28 The Members' workshop's rejection of **Option 2 (Core Strategy)** was based on the impact that over 1,800 additional houses would have on Market Harborough. However, it would be difficult to justify excluding Option 2 from further analysis given that it does not perform poorly on any factor and performs well in relation to Local Plan objectives, viability and 5 year land supply. While it does not perform well on infrastructure, particularly in relation to education in Market Harborough and flooding at various locations, the

effects on transport infrastructure cannot be certain pending the outcome of the Market Harborough Transport Study. As part of detailed assessment of this option, consideration could also be given to a slight variation to the option to give up to 400 extra dwellings at Scraftoft/Thurnby, while correspondingly reducing the number in Market Harborough. This would maintain the continuity of the Core Strategy and its emphasis of development in urban areas, including the Principal Urban Area. ***On this basis, despite being rejected by the Members' workshop, it is recommended that Option 2 be taken forward for further analysis.***

4.29 The other Option which does not perform poorly on any factor is **Option 5 (Kibworth SDA)**. Of the two Kibworth SDA proposals, it is considered that the North and East scheme offers clear advantages because it delivers a by-pass (albeit that the design and capacity of this needs further investigation), as well as the potential for associated benefits for the centre of the village. It also performs well in terms of viability, while the North and West of Kibworth scheme has no beneficial traffic effects and is not viable against Threshold Land Value (although it is viable against Residual Land Value). While the Highway Authority has identified possible knock-on traffic impacts of a Kibworth SDA further along the A6 in Leicester, it is not possible to be certain about these without further traffic modelling. Although this option has infrastructure issues in relation to the secondary school and waste water treatment at Kibworth, together with flooding issues in Market Harborough, south east Kibworth and Fleckney, it performs adequately and better than Option 6 in relation to Local Plan objectives. It would be difficult to justify to an Inspector the rejection of the Kibworth North East option at this stage based on the evidence currently available. ***This scheme came fourth in Members' individual voting and group discussion. It is recommended that the Option 5 be taken forward for further analysis, but based on the Kibworth North and East scheme only.***

4.30 **Option 6 (Lutterworth SDA)** performs well with regard to public support and achieving a five year land supply at the date of adoption and well or adequately on 6 out of 11 factors. However, it performs poorly in relation to impacts on the local road network (Rugby Road) and the M1 Junction 20. It also performs poorly with regard to potential flooding problems both within the SDA and in terms of impacts downstream in Rugby. Although it performs adequately with regard to viability and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report, it does contain the Misterton Marshes SSSI, resulting in an objection from Natural England. This and the flooding issue are reasons why it performs less well in relation to the NPPF Core Planning Principles and the Local Plan objectives. In terms of the NPPF Core Planning Principles there are also doubts over the ability to provide good amenity for future residents given the proximity to the M1 and relatively poor connectivity to Lutterworth's services and facilities. However, some or all of these problems are potentially resolvable through good master-planning and mitigation. It is therefore recommended that ***Option 6 be taken forward for further analysis, in line with the first preference of the group discussion and the second preference in the individual voting at the Members' workshop.***

Scraptoft North SDA (Extension)

- 4.31 A proposal has recently been received for an addition to the Scraptoft/Thurnby SDA. This proposes a further 1200 dwellings on sites to the north, west and east of Scraptoft village, many of which currently form part of the Green Wedge between Scraptoft and Leicester city and a large area of which comprises the Scraptoft Golf Club. Much of the land is owned by Leicester City Council. The Panel have recently reviewed this Green Wedge and resolved that it should be retained.
- 4.32 The scheme is linked to the original Thurnby/Scraptoft SDA (which was subject to consultation and was the subject of the analysis in paras 4.23- 4.26 above). This would involve a link road proposed for the valley between Scraptoft village and Thurnby/Scraptoft south and a distributor road proposed to serve the part of the original SDA site off Covert Lane and then on to the proposed extension to the SDA. Taken together the original SDA and extension would provide 2,900 dwellings, far more than could be developed within the plan period and larger than the proposed SDA at Lutterworth. This would be in addition to the 945 dwellings already completed or committed within Scraptoft and Thurnby, most of which have not yet commenced on site. This would mean a total of nearly 4,000 new dwellings coming forward in the plan period and beyond in this locality.
- 4.33 It seems doubtful if a scheme on this scale would be necessary to meet the requirements of the Local Plan to 2031 (or even to 2036, the end date for the HEDNA), not least because it would result in at least half of the new land to be released across Harborough District for the plan period being located in the extreme north-west corner of the district. This spatial distribution would be unlikely to provide a range of sites to meet the market and would be undesirable in terms of meeting need and providing choice.
- 4.34 However, there may be merit in further investigation of the proposals, but separately from the original SDA already included in the Options consultation, in order to determine whether some or all of the sites could form part of a revised SDA proposal. Although the current SDA has been found to be fundamentally not viable on the basis of a high level assessment, it may be that those costs themselves may be able to be brought down by a different disposition of land with less highway construction costs, and providing the costs of relocating the golf course are covered by land receipts to the golf club.
- 4.35 The Executive should be aware that this further assessment could lead to some modest additional time being needed to complete further work. Further analysis will need to be undertaken concerning how this can be introduced into our work programme. This could include additional transport modelling and a variation of the work being commissioned on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, together with the need for additional viability and landscape appraisal work. Further analysis will be undertaken on these matters, including how they ought to be managed. There is insufficient budget within the local plan project budget if Executive were to approve work on 4 options instead of three. If

approved there would be need for a virement from the corporate contingency budget to fund this work. This is expected not to exceed £20,000.

Panel Recommendation

- 4.36 The Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel, at its meeting on 13 April 2016, received a briefing on the above analysis and had a thorough discussion of the justification for and evidence behind the officers' recommendations. In particular it was recognised that the selected options could not just be a simple reflection of the results of the Members' workshop on 16 March 2016 but had to also reflect the technical analysis that had been going on both before and after that event.
- 4.37 In relation to Thurnby/Scraptoft, there was cross-party agreement that the emerging proposals for Scraptoft North merited further examination, but that it currently extended too far to the east and that in combination with the current Scraptoft/Thurnby SDA it would constitute too much development concentrated in the same area of the district. The Advisory Panel therefore resolved to recommend to the Executive that Option 4 be pursued in addition to the three recommended by the officers (Options 2, 5 and 6) but that this be based on a scheme for a minimum of 1200 dwellings in the vicinity of Scraptoft North. This scheme would be an alternative to (but not in combination with) the Scraptoft/Thurnby SDA that has already been subject to consultation as Option 4 (see paras 4.23- 4.26 above).

Next Steps: Detailed Assessment

- 4.38 The Executive is recommended to resolve that further work be undertaken on 4 draft spatial distribution Options as described in paragraphs 4.28- 4.34 above. This is an operational and technical decision in the light of proportionate supporting evidence to narrow the number of spatial distribution options to be taken forward.
- 4.39 Following this decision, it will be possible to carry out further detailed assessment to include:
- Formulation in more detail of a revised Option 4 based on the land in the vicinity of Scraptoft North, rather than the SDA consulted on in the Options Consultation Paper.
 - Proactive discussion with the promoters of the Lutterworth, Kibworth North and East and Scraptoft North SDAs but on the clear understanding that there is no commitment to any of these schemes being allocated in the Local Plan.
 - Traffic impact assessment relating to the Lutterworth SDA by the County Council as highway authority and Highways England using the Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model (if possible in conjunction with the developer), together with joint traffic modelling (with Leicester City, Oadby and Wigston Borough and Leicestershire County Councils) of south east Leicester and surrounding areas to assess the impacts of the potential Scraptoft North and Kibworth (N and NE) SDAs.

- Further viability assessment including interrogation of infrastructure costs and housing market prices, especially with regard to the emerging Scraftoft North SDA.
- Infrastructure requirements, to ensure that all relevant facilities and costs have been covered.
- Flood risk assessment, including the role of the Lutterworth SDA site in providing downstream flood storage and the impact of development on the hydrology of the area and of this on the Misterton Marshes SSSI.
- Land availability, including the extent to which some specific larger sites would be included in allocations and the extent to which emerging Neighbourhood Plans can be demonstrated to deliver their housing requirement in each Option.
- Environmental impacts, including relative landscape value and effects on the Misterton Marshes SSSI.
- Sustainability, including relative potential for reducing travel by private car for journeys to work, school, shops and other facilities.

4.40 It should be noted that Set C options comprising two SDAs, while not recommended for specific assessment, would in effect be assessed by the separate analysis of Options 4 (as amended), 5 and 6. Eventually the Council will have to arrive at a single preferred option and one alternative would be to combine elements of various Selected Options in a hybrid solution. Inclusion in the shortlist of Selected Options does not imply any commitment to any particular site or SDA being included in the preferred option.

5. Legal Issues

5.1 It is necessary to pursue an objective and robust approach to option assessment as set out in this report to ensure the Local Plan is capable of being found sound at Examination.

6. Resource Issues

6.1 A decision to include 4 options for further analysis could have implications for the costs of such analysis in terms of staff time and consultancy costs. There is no budget provision for these additional costs. If variant Option 4 is recommended for further analysis then there will be the need for a virement from the corporate contingency budget to fund the additional work. Costs of this work are not expected to exceed £20,000. Provision for the modelling and additional work on three options is included with the approved local plan budget

6.2 The report details how the evidence and rationale for the recommended options should partially mitigate against the local plan process being found unsound

7. Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

- 7.1 The Local Plan will support the sustainable provision of new homes and jobs and assist the Council in meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Housing Act 2004.

8. Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 A timely decision on a preferred option for housing and employment development will help avoid delay to the Local Plan preparation/adoption process with consequent beneficial effect on the following Corporate Risks:

- CR 08 Risk of challengeable planning decisions being taken relating to planning applications for residential development / Risk of planning appeals being upheld relating to residential planning applications.
- CR 10 Local Plan Risks: lack of a sound Local Plan may lead to sporadic development and the inability to defend appeals.

- 8.4 A robust recommendation to Executive in line with the officers' recommendation is required in order to guard against the following project risks:

- Evidence taking longer than anticipated to produce.
- Failure to identify and produce robust evidence base
- Options are not appropriately examined.
- Failure to satisfy Local Plan soundness requirements. This includes failure to ensure the LP is 'positively prepared'.
- Legal challenge or similar investigation due to lack of robust evidence, unsatisfactory Inspector's Report and increased likelihood of groups seeking legal redress.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Consultation has taken place with the Planning and Regeneration Portfolio holder and with all Members through two Member workshops

10. Options

- 10.1 To select just one Preferred Option at this stage.

While this would simplify the process, it is not considered that there is sufficient information available at present to enable this choice to be made without opening the Council up to challenge at the Local Plan examination.

- 10.2 To progress all 9 Options for further detailed assessment.

This would create an enormous amount of work which would not be feasible if a Local Plan is to be put in place by 2017. The 9 Options need to be narrowed down into a smaller number, and ultimately a preferred option, which will form the basis of the draft Local Plan to be published for consultation in November

2016. This narrowing-down process must stand up to scrutiny by the future independent Local Plan Planning Inspector and objectors during the Examination process. As such, it needs to be robust, evidence-based, and objective and ultimately lead to the most sustainable and appropriate option for the spatial distribution of development across the district. This does not prevent promoters of Options not selected from preparing further information in support of their proposals and submitting this to the Inspector for examination.

10.3 To progress 4 Options as recommended (rather than 3 Options as originally proposed) for further detailed assessment.

Pursuing 4 rather than 3 options could add to the amount and cost of work required and could result in delays to the project plan which is in place to achieve a draft plan for consultation by November and submission in spring 2017. This could in due course run the risk of Secretary of State intervention in Local Plan preparation, as indicated in a recent parliamentary statement, thereby potentially removing decisions from the Council's control. Mitigation includes preparing a revision to the project plan and consideration of additional resources in order to keep to the timetable.

11. Background Papers

[A New Local Plan for Harborough: Options Consultation Paper- September 2015](#)

[Harborough Local Plan: Options Consultation Sustainability Appraisal: Interim Report – September 2015](#)

Assessment of 9 Alternative Housing and Employment Options. *This is available as a background paper, available from the Democratic Services team (E-Mail:democratic.services@harborough.gov.uk).*

Previous report(s): Report to Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel 24 February 2016: Workshops and Options Assessment Methodology.

Report to Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel 13 April 2016: Options Assessment and Selection (Exempt under paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972). *Council Members wishing to see a copy should please contact the Democratic Services team.*

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N

Appendices:

A. Matters Included in the Framework Assessment

B. Analysis of Options Table

APPENDIX A: Matters Included in the Assessment Framework

A. Consultation

For each option, this assessment considers the key issues expressed in the responses to consultation on the 9 options, as well as the numbers of objections and representations of support. It considers where representations come from against the location of the option.

B. Deliverability, comprising evidence on:

1) **Land availability** – using the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), this looks at the extent to which the amount of development proposed for each option can be met from sites in the potential locations suggested by that option. It should be stressed that the SHLAA is purely a research exercise and does not confer any development status on the sites included within it. Within this, different assessments are made against:

- Whether the option would meet the total housing provision sought (including the flexibility allowance);
- Whether the option would meet the potential housing quantum for each settlement; and
- Whether the option would give a 5 year land supply at the date of adoption.

2) **Infrastructure** – using the responses from statutory consultees this assesses the extent to which each option presents challenges for:

- the delivery of infrastructure, including education, power, water, drainage, and flood defences;
- highways and transport, including on local and more distant roads; and
- flooding either of the site itself or further down the water course.

3) **Viability** – focusing in particular on the possible Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) but also using typologies to assess viability by market area, this presents a high level appraisal of whether the costs of development for each option, including infrastructure costs, affordable housing and environmental mitigation, can be borne and still provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.

C. Planning Principles, comprising an assessment against:

1) **Sustainability**- this uses the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (September 2015) prepared by AECOM which gives positive and negative effects of each option in relation to the Sustainability Objectives/ Topics and Sub-criteria set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report as follows:

- Natural Environment: biodiversity, soil, water, geodiversity and agricultural land.
- Built and Natural Heritage: landscape and settlement character and heritage.
- Health and Wellbeing: education, health, recreation, open space access to services, air quality and community cohesion.
- Resilience to Climate Change: flooding and green infrastructure.

- Housing and Economy: housing delivery, rural economy and investment.
- Resource Use: energy efficiency, water efficiency and carbon emissions.

2) ***NPPF Core Planning Principles***

This assesses the options against the 12 Core Planning Principles in the NPPF. The principles can be summarised as:

- Plan-led, allowing predictable and efficient planning decisions.
- A creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places.
- Proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development, meeting housing, business and infrastructure needs, and responding positively to growth opportunities.
- High quality design and good amenity for current and future occupiers.
- Use of renewable resources and energy, supporting transition to low carbon future and taking account of flood risk and climate change.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, reducing pollution and allocating land of lesser environmental value for development.
- Encouraging use of previously developed land.
- Promoting mixed use developments.
- Conserving heritage assets.
- Focussing significant developments to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- Supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing and delivering community and cultural services.

3) ***Local Plan Objectives***

This assesses the options against the emerging Objectives in the Local Plan, i.e. the Draft Objectives in the Options Consultation Paper as amended in response to the consultation responses. They can be summarised as:

- Housing – a range of types, tenures and sizes to meet needs
- Employment – promoting sustainable growth and reducing commuting
- Sustainable location of development
- Delivering necessary infrastructure
- Protection of local services
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Safeguarding and enhancing the built environment and heritage assets
- Supporting and enhancing town and village centres
- Ensuring high quality and sustainable design
- Sustainable transport, reducing car use and traffic impacts
- Reducing flood risk and building resilience
- Reducing the environmental impact of development
- Promoting tourism, cultural activities and countryside access
- Encouraging and supporting neighbourhood planning.

APPENDIX B: Analysis of Options Table

Option	Consul-tation	Deliverability						Planning Principles			
		Land Availability			Infrastructure			Viability	SA	NPPF	Local Plan
		Total housing	By settle-ment	5 year supply	General	Transport	Flooding				
1 Rural		OK	Shortfall in Husbands Bosworth & some SRVs	> 6 years supply at adoption	Capacity issues for schools & water / sewage	Promotes car journeys. 3 sites> 70% capacity	Problems in SE Kib, PUA, MH, Fleckney & some SRVs	Viable based on typologies, except Blaby Borders (marginal). 97% dwellings viable v Residual Land Value; 83% v Threshold LV.	Most unsustain-able. Effects insufficient to bring benefits.	Contributes least to delivery of core principles	Contributes least to delivery of objectives
2 Core Strategy		OK	Shortfall in Mkt Harb', H Bosworth & some SRVs	> 6 years supply at adoption	Education issues in Market Harborough	3 monitoring sites> 70% capacity	Problems in SE Kib, PUA, MH & Fleckney	Viable based on typologies, except Blaby Borders (marginal). 95% dwellings viable v Residual Land Value; 83% v Threshold LV.	More positive for urban areas, but less so for rural areas.	Performs well in promoting urban vitality/supporting rural communities	Contributes most to delivery of objectives
3 Urban		Fails to deliver	Significant shortfalls in MH, Lutter & one SRV	Fails to deliver	Education & sewage problems in Mkt Harb'	4 sites> 70% capacity. Pressure on MH & PUA.	High risks in Mkt Harb', & downstream from PUA	Viable based on typologies, except Blaby Borders (marginal). 91% dwellings viable RLV; 83% v TLV.	Concentrated in sustainable locations	Performs well but reliance on MH & PUA could have flooding impacts	Performs well but increasing impacts for MH and PUA
4 Scraptoft/ Thurnby	Least support	OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	> 6 years supply at adoption	Needs primary school & WTW upgrade in Thurnby	A47 at 84% capacity. 3 monitoring sites> 70%	Downstream flood risk in Leicester city	S/T SDA fundamentally not viable due to low land values and infrastructure costs. 72% dwellings viable v RLV	Some negative effects at S/T/B. Effects less extreme overall	Delivers dev't but impacts on local historic & natural environment	Performs well but impacts on landscape/ hist. env/flood risk
5 Kibworth		OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	OK	Needs primary school & sewer /WTW imp'ts. 2ndry ed issue	Impacts on city network: 4 sites> 70% capacity	Problems in SE Kibworth, Mkt Harb' & Fleckney	Kibworth NW marginally viable; Kibworth NE viable. 98% dw'gs viable v RLV. With NW 64% viable v TLV, but with NE 88%.	Some negative effects at Kibworth Effects less extreme overall	Delivers dev't but potential historic environment impacts	Performs well but impacts on landscape/ historic env
6 Lutter-worth	Most support	OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	> 6 years supply at adoption	Scope for growth at Lutt-erworth re education.	Highways impacts on J20 & A426 (94% & 84% capacity)	Extensive flood zone 2 & 3 at Lutter-worth	SDA financially viable (v RLV) / marginally not viable (v TLV). 98% dwellings viable v RLV; but 50% or 87% viable v TLV.	Some negative effects at Lutt. Effects less extreme overall	Delivers development but potential flood and SSSI impacts	Performs less well due to impacts on SSSI and flooding
7 Scraptoft + Kibworth	Least support	OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	Marginal supply only	Need primary schools/WTW imp'ts. Kibw'th 2ndry ed issue	Impacts on Leicester network from 2 SDAs	Down stream flood risk in Leicester city	S/T SDA fundamentally not viable; Kib NW marginally viable; Kib N/E viable. 74% dw'gs viable v RLV; 42%/66% v TLV.	Fewer & less extreme effects.	Delivers dev't but potential historic environment/ flooding issues	Performs well but impacts on landscape/ hist env't /flooding
8 Scraptoft + Lutterw'th		OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	OK	Need primary schools & WTW upgrade in Thurnby.	Highways impacts on J20 & A426; + Leic city	Extensive flood zone 2 & 3 at Lutter-worth.	S/T SDA fundamentally not viable; Lutt'w'th SDA viable / marginally not viable. 74% dw'gs viable v RLV; 69% v TLV.	Fewer effects at the extremes.	Delivers development but flooding/ hist. env/SSSI impacts	Performs less well. Impacts on SSSI, flooding & historic env
9 Lutterw'th + Kibworth	Most support	OK	Shortfall in some SRVs	Marginal supply only	Need primary schs. WTW imp'ts Kibw'th 2ndry ed issue	Highways impacts on J20 & A426; + Leic city	Extensive flood zone 2 & 3 at Lutter-worth.	Lutt SDA viable / marginally not viable; Kib NW marginally viable; Kib NE viable. 100% dw'gs viable v RLV; 33/58/70/95% v TLV.	Least effects District-wide	Delivers dev. but potential flood/ historic. Env't /SSSI impacts.	Performs less well. Impacts on SSSI, flooding & historic env't

Glossary of Terms

Principal Urban Area (PUA)

The Leicester Principal Urban Area is a term used across Leicestershire to describe the whole built-up area of Leicester. It covers the Leicester City administrative area and all surrounding built-up areas which are physically joined to it. This includes Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby within Harborough District.

Residual Land Value (RLV)

The residual land value is a method used to determine the value and potential profitability of a piece of property minus any expenses related to the land. Residual land value is the potential revenue the land generates after any and all deductions associated with the cost of developing, maintaining or reselling the land.

Rural Centres

Rural Centres are identified in the Harborough Core Strategy (2011) as the focus for rural affordable and market housing, additional employment, retail and community uses to serve the settlement and its rural catchment area. They are identified based on the settlement having at least four of six relevant services (food shop, GP surgery, Library, post office, primary school and pub).

Selected Rural Village (SRV)

Selected Rural Villages are identified in the Harborough Core Strategy (2011) as villages suitable for development of a lesser scale than Rural Centres. They are identified on the basis of having at least two of the six relevant services (food shop, GP surgery, Library, post office, primary school and pub).

Threshold Land Value (TLV)

The threshold land value is the amount a willing landowner might be tempted to release land for development at.